

KWr/SBa

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Further to the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday evening, I regret to inform you that Whitley Academy will be closed with immediate effect to most students other than those that the school recognises as vulnerable, and the children of critical workers. All other students will engage with our home learning provision online.

### **Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers**

School will open for these children only from Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. We have endeavoured to plan learning for students following their timetable in the most part and organised staffing to reflect the numbers of children we believe will be involved across each of their year groups. Students will not be required to wear uniform and should wear clean, warm, appropriate clothing. They should however remember to wear their mask in communal areas and carry a spare mask in a plastic bag in their school bag. They must also remember to bring equipment with them, so that they are ready for learning with the minimum disruption. It is important in this regard that we work together to ensure everyone can stay safe.

The full list of those occupations considered by the government to be "critical" can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>. If we already know you that you would like a place, because you have been in touch, then you need not do anything because we have already organised provision for your child/children. However, if you are a Key Worker and new to the school, or you have not used this provision before, and would like to, then please contact [admin@whitleyacademy.com](mailto:admin@whitleyacademy.com) with the details of your employment and the times your child needs to be in school, if you plan to use the provision flexibly around your working hours.

### **Home Learning**

As was the case during the first Lockdown in March of last year, we will now focus all of our efforts, providing high quality home education including live teaching, narrated presentations and a range of resources and assessment. One positive is that we already have the systems and expertise in online teaching which will enable us to deliver lessons that will support students to continue to make progress. Staff will set and share work via MS Teams and the live lessons will also be delivered using this application.

All students have access to Office 365. Students are able to download the Office suite of products (Word, Excel, Powerpoint etc.) and have access to a **@student.whitleyacademy.com** email address. These email addresses should be used for students to login to MS Teams and they should submit any completed work via the chat function within the application or by simply uploading the work into the MS Teams class group. Furthermore, staff will be able to communicate with the students using this email address. Members of staff will be able to support you with technical difficulties if required. You will need to contact the school directly to request this or email [homelearningsupport@whitleyacademy.com](mailto:homelearningsupport@whitleyacademy.com).

Your child's username will be the same one they would use to access WARDs or log on to any school computer. This is also true for their password. If your son/daughter cannot remember either their username or password, please email [ITservices@whitleyacademy.com](mailto:ITservices@whitleyacademy.com) with your child's name, year group and whether it is their username or password that they have forgotten so that someone is able to help you promptly.

If your child has any issues, **including having no access to online learning**, or you need any other support from the school please contact the appropriate Progress Manager, who will do their best to help you:

Year 7	Miss Morgan (r.morgan@whitleyacademy.com)
Year 8 and Year 9	Mrs Stanbrook (h.stanbrook@whitleyacademy.com)
Year 10 and Year 11	Miss Buckler (a.buckler@whitleyacademy.com)

### **BTEC Examinations**

The scheduled January Vocational Examinations (Business/IT/Travel & Tourism/H&S Care/IMedia/Applied Science) are going ahead as planned. Revision sessions for these will run online before the exams themselves will take place in school. Students must attend at least 15 minutes before each exam is scheduled to start and must dress warmly in appropriate clothing. School uniform will not be required. Additional clarity regarding the timings for the online learning sessions will follow later this afternoon.

We need to wait for further guidance before advising Y11/Y13 on their next steps in relation to further examinations. However, it is essential for all Y11 and Y13 students to continue to study hard in all subjects, especially as we might be required to make assessed judgments and provide evidence for grade submissions. The Mock exams planned for this half term will not go ahead. Students are likely to be assessed when we return but the manner of these assessments has not yet been decided.

### **Free School Meals**

As soon as we know what the latest information about the allocation of Free School Meals, we will update you. If you think that you are now eligible for free school meals when you haven't been before, you can check your eligibility and/or make an application at:

[https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free\\_school\\_meals/2](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free_school_meals/2)

### **Health**

Please follow all Government Health advice and guidance as it is updated and try to minimise contact with others in order to limit the spread of this virus. We should not see any students out on their own or out with friends during this time.

Please DO NOT send students to school if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 and arrange to get a test as soon as possible. Please contact the school if your child tests positive and has been in contact with others who are attending school throughout the lockdown, as per the guidance.

### **Lateral Flow Testing**

Once you receive your consent forms for Lateral Flow Testing (which is likely to be in the next few days), we would appreciate their swift return. Staff and students who are in school during this period will have access to these tests. When all students return to school, we understand that LFT will begin in earnest.

### **Our Staff**

We will continue to do our best for all students and families during this time, and our staff will be carrying out wellbeing checks regularly.

Please remember that our staff, too, have their own families who need home schooling, and whom they have to support. Should things not go quite to plan, please communicate with us politely and we will do everything we can to help, as quickly as possible.

With the vaccine now slowly rolling out across the country, we hope that this period of school closure will at least be much shorter than the last one. From the Prime Minister's announcement, it was suggested that we may be reopening after half term in February; more to follow on this in due course.

This is without doubt the biggest challenge that we have faced yet. During the last lockdown our whole school community pulled together and made us proud. Let's continue to work together to keep students happy, balanced and to continue their learning. If you need any support whatsoever please don't hesitate to contact us and we will either help you the best we can or signpost you to someone with the skills to support you.

Yours faithfully



Mrs K. Wright  
**Head Teacher**

